Chapter 22

Determinants of Brand Recall in Social Networking Sites

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to contribute to the understanding of how brand impressions in social networking sites influence brand recall. Further, the relationship between the built-in metrics offered by social networking sites and brand recall are also examined to assess the validity of these metrics as measures of advertising effectiveness. Results indicate a positive relationship between brand recall and self-brand congruence, tie-strength with, trust toward, and perceived popularity of the profile associated with the post, and clicking a link embedded in the post/ad in which the brand appears. On the other hand, there is not a significant difference between the levels of brand involvement, homophily with the profile associated with the post/ad, like-count, and four types of built-in user-interaction options including liking, sharing, posting a comment and tagging among the brands that were successfully retrieved from the memory and those were not.

INTRODUCTION

Today, consumers are more than passive buyers and audience members; they are also creators and distributors of media content (Vanden Bergh et al., 2011). Social network sites (SNS), which are sets of individuals, organizations and social entities connected by a set of social relationships such as friendship, co-working or information exchange (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1997) also take part in the distribution of marketing information by allowing users to actively engage with branded-content delivered to them via sponsored stories, stories about friends, page publishing or ads coupled with social connotations. Since consumers typically judge information regarding the marketplace provided by other consumers to be more trustworthy and credible (Pornpitakpan, 2004), leveraging user-generated or -distributed content in social media is imperative for marketers (Liu-Thompkins, 2012; Schivinski

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& Dabrowski, 2014). The value of these practices has been well documented in the context of word of
mouth, or referral effects (Chu & Kim, 2011; Keller & Fay, 2012; Lee & Youn, 2009).

More recently the breadth of the domain of inquiry expanded to include more detailed issues such
as the antecedents of consumer perceptions and responses toward advertisements on social networks
(Soares & Pinho, 2014), motivations for consumer engagement with brand pages (Kabadayi & Price,
2014; Logan, 2014), the effects of likes and friends’ likes on Facebook brand pages in influencing brand
related outcomes (Phua & Ahn, 2014; Tsai & Men, 2013), and development of a typology of Facebook
fans (Wallace, 2014). However, despite the managerial relevance, the impact of delivering brand impres-
sions [i.e., exposure to the brand elements in a manner that strengthens overall brand evaluation (Dillon
et al., 2001)] in social media on the state of brand-related knowledge stored in the memory (i.e., brand
awareness) has been largely missing in the relevant literature. The main reason for this conspicuous lack
of researcher interest on this issue conceivably lies in the practical difficulties of employing a full-scope
experimental research (preferably live on platforms such as Facebook) capturing the essential components
of social media experience, which constitutes the dominant approach in assessing brand awareness in
the literature. One of the most interesting researches on this area was conducted by Alves and Antunes
(2015), who found out that consumers expect to personal advantages through proximity to the brands on
the Internet and that the activity of following brands on social networks impacts on purchase decision
processes of customers.

Thus it can be stated that as this new marketing medium unfolds, brands enthusiastically race to
establish a presence in SNs (Malhotra et al., 2013; Rohm et al., 2013), however with a very limited un-
derstanding of the true impact of their activities on brand-awareness. Today, the key metrics developed
to measure effectiveness of brand communications in SNS are based on simple interaction counts and
talk-about (e.g., the number of mentions, likes, shares, comments, views, re-tweets), saying very little
about the extent to which these incidences positively contribute to brand awareness (Lipsman et al., 2012;
Phua & Ahn, 2014). Over-reliance on such metrics adds to the difficulty of grasping the full promise
of social media marketing. As such, current practice and research lacks evidence to what extent brand
impressions delivered via social media influences brand recall.

Facebook is a useful platform to conduct such practice, which is the dominant social networking
site with more than 1 billion monthly active users. An important attempt to build a reliable method for
calculating the engagement rate of the Facebook brand pages was carried out by Vadivu and Neelamalar
(2015), who aimed to identify the extent to which the moderators’ post influences the engagement rate
of its audience in terms of its content, frequency and the number of fans present for a particular brand
page. Through observing and probing Facebook users as they are being exposed to branded content while
spending time in their own Facebook accounts, the present study aims to provide exploratory insights
for the following questions:

- Can users retrieve the brand impressions delivered via SNs from their memory?
- What factors associated with delivering brand impressions in SNs facilitate the retrieval of brand
  name from memory?
- Does engaging with a branded content encountered in SNs enhance the retrieval of the associated
  brand name from memory?
- Can SNs-provided simple interaction counts be used as reliable indicators for the impact of brand
  impressions on brand awareness in SNS?